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Report of the Commission on
the Tilley East Area

February 20, 1926



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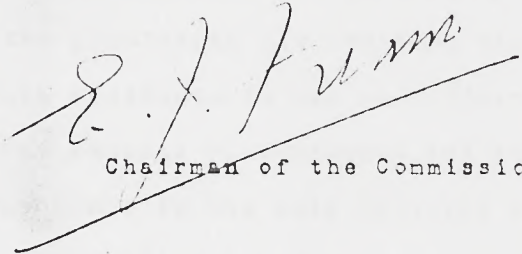
Edmonton, December 8th, 1926.

The Honourable J. E. Brownlee,
Premier and Chairman of the Executive Council,
Province of Alberta,
EDMONTON, Alberta.

Sir,

I have the honour to present herewith the Report of the Commission appointed by Order-in-Council, dated February 20th, 1926, to enquire into, report on and make recommendations in regard to matters affecting the welfare of that part of the Province of Alberta generally known as the Tilley East Area.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "E. J. F. M. M.", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is slanted and somewhat stylized.

Chairman of the Commission.

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Approved and Ordered,

(SIGNED) W. Egbert,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR.

Edmonton, Saturday, February 20th, 1926.

Upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Attorney General, dated February 1st, 1926, the Executive Council advises that, pursuant to The Public Inquiries Act, being Chapter 26 of the Revised Statutes of Alberta, 1922, it be and is hereby deemed expedient and in the public interest to cause enquiry to be made into all the conditions presently prevailing in the following district, namely: that part of the Province of Alberta lying to the South of the Red Deer River, to the East of the line between Range 10 and Range 11, West of the fourth P.M., to the West of the Easterly boundary of the Province and to the North of the South Saskatchewan River; and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to enquire into the population now residing therein, and the lands occupied by such residents in the said District; the value of such land and the amounts of mortgages and other charges against the same; the lands in the said District owned by private persons, and the amount of the mortgages and charges against any such land; the financial standing of all municipalities, villages and school districts within the said District; the nature of the land in the said District, and the use to which the same may be most profitably put; and the measures necessary to bring the said land into such profitable use:

The Executive Council further advises upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Attorney General, that the said matters be and are hereby deemed to be matters within the jurisdiction of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, and to be connected with the good government of the said Province and the conduct of the public business thereof, and further that

the said matters be and are hereby declared to be matters of public concern.

The Executive Council further advises, upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Attorney General, that EDWARD JOHN FREAM, of the City of Edmonton, VICTOR MEEK, of the City of Ottawa, JONATHAN WARD MARTIN, of the City of Calgary, and ZACHARIAH McILMOYLE, of the City of Edmonton, be and they are hereby appointed COMMISSIONERS to make the aforesaid Inquiry and to report thereon to the Lieutenant Governor in Council; the said Edward John Fream to be Chairman of such Commissioners.

The Executive Council further advises, upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Attorney General, that there be and is hereby conferred upon the said Commissioners in and by the Commission, the power of summoning witnesses before them and of requiring such witnesses to give evidence on oath, orally or in writing, or on solemn affirmation (if they are persons entitled to affirm in civil matters), and to produce such documents and things as the said Commissioners may deem requisite to the full investigation of the matters into which they are appointed to inquire.

(SIGNED) J. E. Brownlee,

CHAIRMAN.

To the Honourable J.E. Brownlee,
Premier and Chairman of the Executive Council,
Province of Alberta,
EDMONTON, Alberta.

The Commission appointed by Order-in-Council, dated February 20, 1926, to enquire into, report on and make recommendations in regard to matters affecting the welfare of that part of the Province of Alberta generally known as the Tilley East Area, begs to report and recommend as follows:-

HEARINGS AND CONFERENCES.

The Commission held public hearings at the following places:-

Calgary	Thursday, February 25, 1926, with the representatives of the Mortgage Interests.
Calgary	Friday morning, February 25, 1926, with the representatives of the banks.
Calgary	Friday afternoon, February 25, 1926, with the representatives of the Implement companies and lumber companies.
Alderson	Wednesday, March 10, 1926.
Suffield	Thursday, March 11, 1926.
Redcliff	Friday, March 12, 1926.
Empress	Monday, March 22, 1926.
Bindloss	Tuesday, March 23, 1926.
Cavendish	Wednesday afternoon, March 24, 1926.
Buffalo	Wednesday evening, March 24, 1926.
Bindloss	for the farmers from Social Plains, Wednesday evening, March 24, 1926.
Jenner	Thursday, March 25, 1926.
Atlee	Friday, March 25, 1926.

The Commission was also supplied with considerable information by departments of the Dominion and Provincial Governments and by officials of Municipal Districts and School Districts within the territory known as the Tilley East area.

Statistical Information.

The Commission was informed that the amount of land within the Tilley East area is 1,566,805.23 acres, and that as at January 1, 1926, the disposition of said lands was:-

Alienated lands.....	675,470.83	acres
Agreement of Sale.....	76,571.20	"
Vacant School Lands.....	66,725.70	"
Stock watering Reserves.....	3,400.50	"
Antelope and Park Reserves.....	55,122.90	"
Patented, Soldier Settlement Board.....	1,277.00	"
Agreement of Sale, Soldier Settlement Board.....	5,816.00	"
School lands under temporary grazing permit.....	6,184.80	"
Grazing leases.....	334,636.20	"
Vacant Dominion Lands.....	233,213.10	"
Canada Land & Irrigation Company.....	108,407.00	"
	<u>1,566,805.23</u>	"

The information submitted to the Commission shows that a considerable percentage of the lands alienated from the Crown, in the right of the Dominion of Canada, is passing to the Crown in the right of the Province of Alberta, through the failure of the owners thereof to pay taxes levied against their lands and that the claims registered against such lands are far in excess of their value.

The municipal organizations within the Tilley East Area consist of the Town of Redcliff, the Villages of Suffield, Alderson, Jenner and Empress, the Municipal Districts of Sunny South No. 123, King No. 153 and Britannia No. 183, Jenner Consolidated School District No. 24 and Redcliff (Town) School District No. 2283, Suffield (village) School District No. 2757, Alderson (Village) School District No. 2114, Empress (Village) School District No. 3145 and fifty-one (51) rural school districts.

Local Improvement Districts Nos. 122, 152, 182, and 211, also form part of this area.

The Commission made no enquiry into the affairs of the Town of Redcliff and the Redcliff School District NO. 2283 as these local authorities, although within the area, are in an industrial community and while they are carrying a heavy indebtedness and are in default, they have been dealt with in another way and the liabilities outstanding against them do not require consideration at the present time.

The Village of Empress and the Empress School District No. 3145 also come into a different class as Empress is a divisional point on the Swift Current-Bassano Branch of the C.P.R. and has other interests in addition to those of farming.

The financial statements of the local authorities other than Redcliff, show as at December 31st, 1925, the following:-

VILLAGES.

Villages	Debtore liability.	Bank liability	Supp. Revenue Liability.	Sundry A/cs. Payable.	Uncollected Supp. Rev. Taxes.	Uncollected Village Taxes.	NetCash on hand.
Suffield	nil	nil	120.42	375.00	190.27	4453.85	37.19
Alderson	nil	nil	nil	nil	330.00	14194.25	214.76
Jenner	nil	nil	nil	nil	47.94	1023.63	102.55
Empress	nil	647.76	206.84	1692.65	928.82	25887.27	611.78
Totals.....	647.75	327.26	2067.65	1497.03	45559.00	966.28	

RURAL MUNICIPALITIES.

L o a n s			T r u s t L i a b i l i t i e s							
Rural Municipalities	Debtore liability	Municipal	for schools.	Health Dept.	Dept. of Agricul- ture.	Sundry A/cs.	Due on Supp. Rev.	School and Education- al.	Wild lands.	Hall
M.D. of Sunny South	nil	nil	1376.17	137.60	1616.07	1304.27	291.70	309.05	1164.38	-
M.D. of King	nil	nil	-	9471.30	679.00	-	-	-	-	-
M.D. of Britannia	nil	nil	-	-	-	150.00	-	-	-	-
Totals.....			1376.17	9668.90	2295.07	1454.27	291.70	309.05	1164.38	

Uncollected Taxes.

Supplement- ary Rev.		Wild lands.	Destruction of posts.	Educational	Hall	School	Municipal
M.D. of Sunny South	15769.55	9974.30	1667.45	10136.26	3243.09	22587.20	24700.45
M.D. of King	13686.49	8292.48	331.95	6806.80	1237.64	45906.94	33787.53
M.D. of Britannia	26275.84	9707.05	346.66	10664.11	8455.99	47461.40	45874.68
Totals.....	62732.88	19236.83	2546.06	29657.17	12936.72	115955.54	104362.66

Seed Grain and Relief.

Amount owing by District.		Amount owing to District by farmers.	
Seed Grain.	Relief.	Seed Grain.	Relief.
M.D. of Sunny South	76145.29	43033.85	43330.38
M.D. of King	167745.56	70213.31	67207.47
M.D. of Britannia	96302.92	16284.75	19036.30
Totals.....	342193.76	131531.91	129574.15

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

<u>Name of District.</u>	<u>Debiture liability.</u>	<u>Sundry Accounts.</u>	<u>Due to Dept. of Education.</u>	<u>Uncollected Taxes.</u>	<u>Net cash on hand.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
Suffield No. 2757	nil	875.00	nil	11102.00	278.00	School operating full year.
Alderson No. 2114	nil	nil	779.35	12494.00	373.60	School operating full year.
Jenner Consolidated No. 24	1360.00	nil	4358.50	17666.69	(500.00 894.24	School operating full year.
Empress No. 3145	12357.30	3499.00	7209.91	29261.77	8529.08	School operating full year.
Powell No. 1912	nil	47.50	777.61	4929.17	98.79	School operating full year.
Osborne No. 2520	nil	129.00	2728.51	4445.82	130.78	School operating full year.
Colonia No. 2523	nil	12.00	2425.54	4622.52	107.74	School operating full year.
Social Plains No. 2813	nil	65.00	2011.47	2748.29	467.81	School operating full year.
Cavendish No. 3129	1389.00	nil	1994.24	7261.98	434.43	School operating full year.
Atleo No. 3369	705.00	-	1256.43	not available	-	School operating full year.
Hindloss No. 3603	570.00	98.88	995.27	591.58	968.29	School operating full year.
Forks No. 3606	845.80	339.95	1769.62	2112.75	340.47	School operating full year.
Lila No. 3947	2991.90	755.70	670.28	1102.83	822.01	School operating full year.
Beautyland No. 3592	940.00	40.00	1825.42	4541.14	454.74	School operating part of year only.
Viewfield No. 3565	1532.75	187.00	1060.90	4578.31	535.69	School operating part of year only.
East Springs No. 3861	nil	140.28	767.56	3351.25	40.98	School operating part of year only.
Rainy Hill No. 2313	nil	57.30	1091.46	3284.35	296.16	Operating with Idlesleigh.
Idlesleigh No. 3608	nil	nil	nil	4177.58	636.40	Operating with Rainy Hill.
Box Springs No. 2749	nil	102.64	953.72	3441.80	33.83	Operating with Terro Nova
Terro Nova No. 2799	nil	35.00	1110.68	3480.62	18.21	Operating with Box Springs.
Pipe Line No. 2383	645.35	86.50	1469.29	3514.56	88.66	Operating with Pearsonville. and Kirke McKinnon.
Pearsonville No. 2979	nil	60.00	2366.02	5817.73	71.53	Operating with Pipe Line. and Kirke McKinnon.
Kirke McKinnon No. 2936	360.70	180.40	1914.85	5101.32	1.81	Operating with Pipe Line and Pearsonville.

<u>Names of District.</u>	<u>Debiture Liability.</u>	<u>Sundry Accounts.</u>	<u>Due to Dept. of Education.</u>	<u>Uncollected Taxes.</u>	<u>Net cash on hand.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
Bingville No. 3182	196.90	150.00	1924.15	3443.72	39.95	Operating with Bray Lake and Lotus.
Lotus No. 3725	1344.60	nil.	881.79	3272.40	52.26	Operating with Bingville and Bray Lake.
Bray Lake No. 4046	nil	204.85	316.67	2744.63	3.11	Operating with Lotus and Bingville
Slide Creek No. 2254	nil	83.20	1734.62	4445.82	228.56	Closed, sending children to Osborne.
Partio Flat No. 2362	nil	101.10	830.68	3697.60	74.48	Closed, sending children to Redcliff
Proszelawn No. 2476	1053.00	544.23	1262.27	6093.69	6.10	Closed, sending children to Powell
Halpeland No. 2743	nil	363.00	2742.30	7438.89	53.30	Closed, sending children to Suffield and Medicine Hat.
Slide Creek No. 2937	nil	98.75	1491.54	3085.00	445.05	Closed, sending children to Polonia.
Valley Springs No. 3051	nil	319.90	nil	1118.25	51.81	Closed, sending children to Atlee
Verna No. 3104	nil	196.19	nil	556.56	(940.50)	No school, sending children to
Cornlands No. 3218	400.00	78.60	2295.12	4852.66	(364.01)	Perks and Bindless.
Harvest Vale No. 3359	492.40	137.40	603.64	5652.60	23.55	Closed, sending children to Cavendish.
Mossy Bank No. 3538	513.00	123.50	2154.52	6102.81	34.35	Closed, sending children to Redcliff and Powell.
Lake Valley No. 3644	2750.66	95.04	1361.77	4956.57	14.36	Closed, sending children to Alderson.
Nowran No. 2043	net operating, no assessment	nil	nil	1516.85	-	Closed, sending children to Powell
Bainy Valley No. 2254	nil	nil	nil	1516.85	(658.00)	School closed.
Royal No. 1737	nil	24.00	178.13	4101.43	(431.11)	School closed.
Deerless No. 2370	nil	nil	1947.59	7442.56	4.65	School closed.
Club No. 2422	nil	nil	2036.37	6141.34	112.04	School closed.
Blue Grass No. 2421	nil	190.30	361.70	4008.76	6.38	School closed.
Golden West No. 2430	nil	195.00	2167.44	3506.36	44.75	School closed.
Hipa Valley No. 2503	nil	-	1466.00	5812.69	30.98	School closed.

Name of District.	Debiture Liability.	Sundry Accounts.	Due to Dept. of Education.	Uncollected Taxes.	Net cash on hand.	Remarks.
Hoskin No. 2609	nil	20.00	nil	1876.85	401.66	School closed.
Flat Top Butte No. 2906	nil	nil	1135.83	3137.14	52.07	School closed.
Delta No. 2955	164.00	933.20	1665.37	2955.16	252.60	School closed.
Jeff No. 2980	nil	77.00	nil	1179.83	.49	School closed.
New Holland No. 3350	490.65	114.00	3299.67	4947.90	65.27	School closed.
Swart Briar No. 3355	nil	nil	nil	407.13	328.98	School closed.
Cartle Hills No. 3601	nil	155.00	1868.80	4298.83	66.33	School closed.
Little Bell No. 3685	1439.35	207.36	2615.50	6128.03	22.65	School closed.
Willard No. 3719	nil	27.50	1743.86	5901.82	388.00	School closed.
Stalworthy No. 3865	nil	nil	839.92	4206.80	90.27	School closed.
	32595.56	11130.97	79081.58	264384.92	21665.38	

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS.

	Improvement Tax arrears.	Supplementary Rev. arrears.	Educational Tax arrears.	Wild Land Tax arrears.
No. 111	16413.44	9,119.61	7023.68	2,157.58
No. 122	454875.37	\$25,997.97	\$20,506.06	\$51,083.31
No. 152	23451.01	15,583.71	19,792.40	1,873.00
No. 162	30189.64	20,085.38	24,213.06	4,403.68
	\$134929.46	\$69,785.67	\$71,577.20	\$59,517.57

Advances payable to Dominion Government, as at March 31, 1925,

Seed Grain and Fodder.....	\$229,263.00
Sales.....	230,412.00
Total payable to Dominion.....	\$459,675.00

Advances payable to the Provincial Government, as at December 31, 1925,

Seed Grain and Relief Advances.....	\$186,194.25
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SUMMARY.

The financial statements of the local authorities and the debts payable to the Crown, as reported, can be summarized as follows:-

Villages.

Bank liability.....	£647.45
Supplementary Revenue liability....	327.26
Sundry Accounts Payable.....	2067.65
	<u>£3042.36</u>
Uncollected Supplementary Revenue	
Taxes.....	1397.03
Uncollected Village Taxes.....	45559.00
	<u>£46956.03</u>
Net cash on hand.....	<u>£966.28</u>

This record may be considered a good one, and your Commission is of the opinion that no recommendation is necessary in regard to the affairs of the four villages within the area, as they have very few liabilities and should be able to provide for any ordinary requirements out of the annual revenues available for that purpose.

Other Authorities.

Municipal Districts.

Bank Liability.....	1378.17	
Health Department.....	9668.90	
Department of Agriculture.....	2295.07	
Sundry Accounts.....	1454.27	
Supplementary Revenue Taxes	291.70	
School and Educational		
Taxes.....	308.05	
Wild Lands Taxes.....	1164.38	
Uncollected Supplementary		
Revenue taxes.....	62733.88	
Uncollected Wild Lands Taxes.	19236.83	
Uncollected destruction of		
pest taxes.....	1346.06	
Uncollected Educational Taxes	23657.17	
Uncollected Hall Insurance taxes	10936.72	
Uncollected School Taxes.....	119855.54	
Uncollected Municipal Taxes.....	104362.66	
Unpaid Seed Grain Liens.....		742193.76
Unpaid Relief Liens.....		<u>171131.91</u>
	<u>18581.84 347438.86</u>	<u>4737.5.67</u>

Seed Grain Liens owing by farmers to Municipalities...343679.76
Relief Liens owing by farmers to Municipalities.....129574.15

\$473253.91

School Districts.

Debtenture liability outstanding....	32595.56	
Sundry accounts payable.....	11130.97	
Due to Department of Education.....	79081.58	
Uncollected taxes.....		264,384.92
	<u>\$122808.11</u>	<u>\$264,384.92</u>

Improvement Districts.

Uncollected Improvement taxes.....	134929.46
Uncollected Supplementary Rev. taxes.....	69786.67
Uncollected Educational taxes.....	71577.20
Uncollected Wild Land Taxes.....	59517.57
	<u>335811.90</u>

Dominion Government Claims.....\$459,675.00

Provincial Government Claims.....\$186,194.25

While there is no doubt some duplication in the arrears of school taxes, as it is probable that the School Districts and the Rural Municipalities may have reported on the same amount outstanding, this will be more than made up by the accumulations for interest, taxes, etc. which must be added since these statements were prepared and it is reasonable to state that the total chargeable against the lands in this area, for taxes, seed grain and relief liens and other claims, amounts to \$1,714,319.69 and with the addition of the unpaid debtenture liability of the School Districts, amounting to \$32595.56, there is a public liability of approximately 1,746,195.25.

The total acreage against which this liability is chargeable consists of the alienated lands, agreements of sale, Soldier Settlement Board and Canada Land and Irrigation Co. lands, amounting to 867,542 acres, so the average indebtedness for what may be classified as public accounts only, amounts to approximately \$2.00 per acre.

Other Indebtedness.

Another important factor to be considered is the extent to which the alienated lands have been encumbered with mortgages and other charges. Considerable information has been secured from creditors and from the records of the Land Titles Office, but the Commission has not attempted to arrive at the actual liability charged against the lands for the reason that the creditor interests are scattered and so many mortgages are in process of foreclosure, or of adjustment that it would be very difficult to arrive at a definite sum.

The Commission has, therefore, satisfied itself with securing statements from the larger creditor interests and on comparing these with the information secured from the Land Office, it may be stated that the liability charged against the alienated lands, by way of mortgages, caveats, mechanics liens, writs of execution amounts to not less than \$2,750,000.00. The statements supplied by the creditor interests show that a large percentage of the liabilities has increased from the amount originally registered against the land, the reason for this being the accrual of interest, together with taxes and other charges paid by the creditor and charged against the debtor.

The creditor interests consist mainly of mortgage companies, although a considerable amount is carried by private parties, this being particularly true of second mortgages, banks, implement companies and lumber companies.

The total amount of alienated lands against which this liability is chargeable is 682,564 acres, and this means, therefore, that the average liability charged against these lands, apart from the public liability already referred to, amounts to approximately \$4.00 per acre or \$640.00 per quarter section. This average is on all the alienated lands and if it was shown against the encumbered lands only, it would be considerably higher.

This represents a liability greatly in excess of the value of the lands and it is more than the land can earn. These figures show the need for an adjustment of these liabilities, particularly when they represent only the charges registered against the land and do not take into consideration the other accrued liabilities which are registered only against the chattels or are unsecured in any way.

Land Subject to Caveat.

A large amount of the land alienated from the Crown is reverting to the taxing authorities under the provisions of the Tax Recovery Act and, while the actual acreage has not been secured, the following figures supplied by the taxing authorities show the number of quarter sections against which caveats were registered as at the end of 1925.

				<u>No of quarter sections.</u>	<u>Parts of quarters.</u>
Municipal District of Sunny South					
No. 123					
Township	13	Range	9	49	
"	14	"	9	26	
"	12	"	10	18	
"	13	"	10	93	
"	14	"	10	58	
"	15	"	10	75	

Total for Municipal District of Sunny South...319.

Municipal District of King
No. 153.

No. of quarter
sections.

Parts of
quarters.

Township	16,	Range	8	39
"	17	"	9	74
"	18	"	8	51
"	16	"	9	58
"	17	"	9	63
"	18	"	9	66
"	16	"	10	74
"	17	"	10	65
"	18	"	10	30

Total for Municipal District of King..... 520.

Municipal District of
Brittania No. 183.

Township	19,	Range	8	111
"	20	"	8	81
"	21	"	8	54
"	22	"	8	26
"	19	"	9	99
"	20	"	9	100
"	21	"	9	70
"	19	"	10	94
"	20	"	10	69
"	21	"	10	45

Total for Municipal District of Brittania..... 749.

Department of Municipal Affairs.

For Improvement District No. 211.

Township	20,	Range	1	3
"	21	"	1	16
"	22	"	1	22
"	23	"	1	14
"	19	"	2	5
"	20	"	2	22
"	21	"	2	51
"	22	"	2	27
"	23	"	2	9

Total for Improvement District No. 211..... 169

For Improvement District No. 182.

Township	19,	Range	3	5
"	19	"	4	1
"	20	"	4	24
"	21	"	4	54
"	22	"	4	10
"	20	"	5	7
"	21	"	5	22
"	19	"	7	12
"	20	"	7	11
"	21	"	7	5
"	22	"	7	42

Total for Improvement District No. 182..... 193.

For Improvement District No. 152.

			<u>No. of quarter sections.</u>	<u>Parts of quarters.</u>
Township	17,	Range	4	3
"	16	"	5	11
"	17	"	5	8
"	18	"	5	1
"	16	"	6	21
"	17	"	6	13
"	18	"	6	4
"	19	"	6	1
"	16	"	7	25
"	17	"	7	47
"	18	"	7	48

Total for Improvement District No. 152..... 182.

For Improvement District No. 122.

Township	13,	Range	5	17
"	14	"	5	21
"	15	"	5	5
"	12	"	6	4
"	13	"	6	53
"	14	"	6	48
"	15	"	6	49
"	12	"	7	1
"	13	"	7	74
"	14	"	7	38
"	15	"	7	32
"	12	"	8	21
"	13	"	8	102
"	14	"	8	49
"	15	"	8	36

Total for Improvement District No. 122..... 550.

This makes a total of 2682 parcels of 160 acres each, or less, against which caveats were registered as at December 31, 1925, and while some of these may have been redeemed during the present year, it is probable that the 1926 caveats will more than make up for such redemptions and that the total number of parcels now in process of forfeiture under the Tax Recovery Act, is not less than 3000, approximating not less than 480,000 acres. As the total acreage alienated from the Crown amounts to only 781,677.44 acres, this alone is sufficient to show the extent of the depopulation and the rapidity with which the present private owners are allowing their interests to lapse.

Another significant fact in connection with this area is that in many instances first mortgagees have allowed the taxing authorities to take action against the lands on which they hold security and have refused to make the necessary advances to protect the security, while in other cases, the mortgagees have foreclosed and then allowed caveats to be filed against the land. The reason for this may be traced, in some cases, to the Dominion seed grain and relief liens which have priority over the first mortgages, these liens being for more than the

land is worth. The question of the disposal of these prior claims will no doubt have a material effect upon the taxing authorities in taking final proceedings under the Tax Recovery Act, as these authorities will not be prepared to take title when it is subject to liens of this description.

General Information.

Owing to the fact that the Commission is of the opinion that all cases must be dealt with individually and each case settled upon its own merits, no attempt has been made to arrive at a general understanding with the settlers remaining in this area, nor with the interested creditors, nor has the question been discussed with any absentee owners who have clear title to their property.

A considerable amount of information has been given as to the assistance which can be secured by debtors under the provisions of the Debt Adjustment Act and the Bankruptcy Act, and several settlers have taken advantage of the opportunity to bring about an adjustment of their affairs.

When the Commission was first appointed, the impression prevailed in many quarters that the proposal was to take up each settler's case, decide what his equity was worth and arrange to pay him compensation for the losses he had sustained during the past few years, while on the other hand, some of the creditor interests were under the impression that the only proposal which could be considered was that of taking over their interests and allowing the governing authorities to assume the loss. It was to overcome this that the meetings already referred to were held.

Considerable information was secured at these meetings and various proposals made. From the creditor interests there was the suggestion that the system of taxation should be revised and there was a tendency to recognize that most of the investments were bad and could only be disposed of by accepting losses. A proposal which found favor with the larger creditor interests was that of arranging for an exchange of property so that they would be able to consolidate their holdings and interests and secure some return upon their investments.

The information secured from the residents remaining in this area shows that although there has been a considerable depopulation, in fact the number of families moved from this area under the free freight scheme is over 700, there was the desire on the part of those remaining to stay on their farms and make their homes as comfortable as possible. The further crop failure of 1916 has, however, determined many of the settlers that the time has come when they must move to another locality and it is probable that several families will remove from the district in the near future. One difficulty now being met with, however, is that the supply of farms which can be secured on the crop payment plan, about the only method possible to these people, is practically exhausted and that the only opportunity they now have is that of going abroad to seek employment at a long distance from the railway. This is preventing them from moving as they have not the funds required to provide the necessary housing accommodation and to sustain them until the new land can be brought under cultivation and made productive.

Classification of Area.

The lands within the Tilley East area may be classified into districts, as follows:-

1. South Western Section - comprising the lands tributary to Alderson, Suffield and Redcliff. Most of the settlers have removed from this section, although more land has been alienated from the Crown than in any other section. The alienated land includes the holdings of the Canada Land and Irrigation Company which is, however, subject to a mortgage to the Dominion Government.

There are 23 school districts in this section, of which seven (Chub, Newman, Keff, Sweet Briar, Daisy Dell, Rainy Valley and Royal) are closed for the reason that no children are left. There are four districts operating schools for the full year (Redcliff, Howell, Suffield and Alderson) and six districts are sending children to these schools, paying tuition fees of 30¢ per pupil per day. These are - Harvest Vale, sending five children to Redcliff and 1 to Howell; Fertile Flat, 1 to Redcliff; Breckelawn, 3 to Howell; Lake Valley, 1 to Howell; Helgoland, 1 to Suffield and 1 to Medicine Hat; Lossy Bank, 6 to Alderson.

Box Springs and Terro Nova are operating jointly for part of the year, having 10 children.

Pearsonville, Pipe Line and Kirke McKinnon are operating jointly for part of the year, having 9, 2 and 1 children respectively.

East Springs is operating for a short period in each year as funds permit, having 11 children.

2. The Empress - Bindloss Section - comprising the lands in Ranges 1 and 2. A considerable amount of land has been alienated and this Section is practically isolated from the remainder of the area by the Remount Reserve of the Department of Militia.

There are eight school districts in this Section, of which one (Delta) is closed, there being no children in the District; one (Verna) is sending 5 children to Forks and 2 to Bindloss. Empress is operating a graded school with 135 children. Bindloss is operating the full year. Viewfield was operating with 2 children but expected to close at the end of the term. Forks was operating with 11 children and trying to bring about a reorganization with Beautyland and Verna. Beautyland was operating with 3 children but expected to close at the end of the term and Social Plains was operating for part of the year with 14 children.

3. Cavendish-Buffalo Section - comprising approximately three townships in Ranges 4 and 5.

There are three school districts in this section of which one (Cornland) is closed, 5 children being sent to Cavendish; the Cavendish school is open for the full year, with 19 children and the Lila (Buffalo) school is

operating the full year with 19 children.

There is a further educational problem in this section in what is known as "Little Sweden", a demand being made for school accommodation although there does not appear to be sufficient children to warrant same.

4. The Atlee Section - comprising about 1½ townships in Ranges 7 and 8.

There are two school districts in this section, Atlee and Valley Springs; the former operating for part of the year with 12 children, the latter being closed and sending 6 children to Atlee.

5. The Jenner-Iddesleigh Section - comprising the lands situate in the Northern half of the area in Ranges 8, 9 and 10.

There are 11 school districts in this section, including the consolidated school at Jenner.

The Tide Creek, Millard, Peerless, Fertile Hills, Flat Top Butte, High Valley and Stalworthy districts (seven in all) are not in operation and with the exception of Tide Creek, there are no children in these districts. Four children at Tide Creek go to the Osborne school.

The Iddesleigh and Rainy Hill schools are operating together at Iddesleigh, with school in operation for the full year, each district having eight children.

Osborne school is in operation for the full year with 17 children.

Jenner Consolidated School is in operation the full year with 30 children.

6. The Blue Grass-Bingville Section - comprising the lands in Ranges 7, 8, 9 and 10, situate about half way between the two lines of railway.

There are nine school districts in this section. Four districts (Golden West, New Holland, Hoskin and Blue Grass) are not in operation, there being no children in these districts.

The Bingville, Tray Lake and Lotus districts combine to operate one school for part of the year only, there being 5, 2 and 7 children respectively in these districts.

The Polonia District operates for the full year with 12 children from the district. The Tide Lake District is sending 1 child to Polonia. This district is also providing for a few children who are not in any organized school district.

7. The Ranching Section - comprising the leases granted by the Dominion Government for land situate adjacent

to the Saskatchewan and Red Deer Rivers.

At the time the meetings were held most of the settlers were fairly optimistic as to the prospects for 1926. as they claimed that they had never gone into the spring's work in any year since the area was settled when there was so much moisture in the ground, but their expectations were not realized and the fall saw another disastrous crop year, very few farmers in this area having harvested a crop which would net them fair returns for their operations. As already stated, this has had the effect of causing others to move out and it is probable that the figures of school population and schools in operation could now be modified to a considerable extent.

There is a distinct difference of opinion in the various sections, although all sections are unanimous in wanting outsiders kept out of the area and that the present settlers should be given the first opportunity to use the vacant lands.

Residents of some districts, particularly those of Alderson, Suffield, Bingville, Social Plains, Little Sweden and Atlee favoured the community grazing plan while the other districts favoured the individual ownership plan.

Most of the ranchers were of the opinion that the only solution was that of removing all the settlers and allowing the country to go back to the old style ranching.

The residents of the Alderson and Suffield districts are partial to sheep but in the rest of the area cattle are favoured.

In the Empress District there was a desire to leave well enough alone, there being the impression that the land is better than in the rest of the area and that the farmers can work out their own problems. It was admitted, however, that not less than ninety per cent of the land in this district was now unoccupied and that most of this had been abandoned.

The Soil Survey reported on this section as being exceptionally good soil of a silt loam and that the farmers seem to be better established and more prosperous than in the other parts of the Tilley East Area. These lands lie East of the Military Mount Reserve and can readily be segregated from the remainder of the area.

Views of Settlers.

The views of the settlers can be summed up as follows:-

Taxation Assessments have been based on fictitious values and arrears of taxes should be cancelled or reduced to such an extent that the balance payable will be within the reach of all.

Community Grazing. In some parts, there is the feeling that it is only by community grazing that the lands can be made productive.

Limitation of Stock. That a limit be placed on the number of stock each resident shall run, to safeguard the pasture and that residents only be allowed to run stock.

Compulsory Fencing. In some districts the opinion prevailed that every resident must fence all land for his personal use.

Additional land for residents. Where residents have less than a section of land, that adjoining land be secured for them to insure them having at least one section for the purpose of cultivation, pasture for work horses, etc.

Limitation of areas. That specially defined areas be set aside for summer grazing.

Watering Places. That open spaces be provided to the rivers so that the residents will have a chance to get their stock to water, such open spaces being not less than one-half mile in width.

That when there is no surface water available, the water from spring freshets be conserved in dams, or artesian wells be secured.

Road Work. That roadwork, with the exception of repairs to the main highways, be discontinued and that the money previously used for this purpose be diverted to the construction of dams or artesian wells.

Demonstration Plots. That demonstration plots by farmers be encouraged, such plots to be under the supervision of the District Agriculturist.

That further experiments be carried on with corn and sweet clover.

That an effort be made to secure grasses that will withstand the dry climate and bring back the root fibre into the soil.

That further experiments be conducted towards finding other classes of fodder suitable for the area.

Other suggestions, more local in their nature, were received, and some of these may be summed up as follows:-

Unoccupied Areas. The establishment of centralized communities in unoccupied areas.

Removing abandoned buildings to these communities.

Gathering up the abandoned barbed wire which is now a menace to stock and using same in these communities.

Centralization of the residents, so that it will be possible for them to enjoy social and educational facilities, etc.

Securing an adequate water supply, by preserving the spring freshets.

Seed Grain and Relief Indebtedness. There was a strong demand at all meetings that some arrangements be made for a readjustment of the Seed Grain and Relief Indebtedness now charged against the land.

Other Indebtedness. There was a strong demand that all creditor interests be prepared to share in the losses which have been sustained in this area and that the liabilities should be adjusted

the residents, as well as those charged against settlers who have moved to new locations, be compromised, and that the rate of interest be reduced.

Priority to vacant lands. That present residents be given priority to vacant lands.

Road allowances. That arrangements be made for closing road allowances, so that residents could hold their lands in one parcel and that only the roads required to serve the different communities be opened up.

The Reclamation Branch of the Department of the Interior submitted a report dealing with the lands in this area, which was placed at the disposal of the Commission. The report claims that out of a total of 2386 resident farmers who once occupied lands in the district only approximately 645 remained at the end of 1924, and it is probable that this number has now been reduced to well under 500, those remaining ranching on a small scale and utilizing as range the vacated farms of their neighbours and, while the lands are more suitable for ranching than for farming, due to successive dry years, overstocking of the range and cultivation of lands, much of the area cannot be considered at the present time as being desirable even for pasture.

Possibilities of Irrigation. Information supplied as to the effect that the topographical features of this area are such as to preclude the possibility of reaching any large proportion of the land by canals from any source whatsoever and that generally the lands are of such a nature as to be unsuitable for the economical construction of any irrigation system. It seems to be fairly well established that the reclamation by irrigation of any considerable proportion of the area is not economically feasible and that this area must be classified as being non-irrigable.

Rainfall.

The lands in this area have a low average rainfall and the rolling or hilly nature of much of the land makes it unsuitable for cultivation and lends itself to the proposal for a combination of farm and ranch.

Rainfall records have been kept at Medicine Hat for a period of 41 years, at Suffield for 10 years and at Jenner for 9 years, according to the information supplied the Commission, and these records show that the mean precipitation during the crop growing season has not been sufficient to provide the average amount of moisture required for growing crops.

The figures supplied, which end at December 31, 1923, show the following:-

Crop Growing Season.

	<u>April.</u>	<u>May.</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>Total for season</u>
Jenner, 9 yrs. average....	0.88	1.78	2.43	1.96	1.51	8.56
Suffield, 10 years average....	0.45	1.13	1.43	2.28	1.02	6.36
Medicine Hat, 41 yrs. average.....	0.70	1.68	2.57	1.80	1.34	8.09

The average yearly precipitation during the same period has been:-

Jenner.....	13.65
Suffield.....	9.90
Medicine Hat.....	12.76

It is probable that the figures for the past two years, if added to the general average, would have the effect of further reducing the figures above given.

S U M M A R Y.

To sum up the general information which has been secured, it may be said that the following outlines generally the suggestions made to the Commission:-

- (1) That it is necessary to bring the land, as far as possible, to single ownership, that is, that the lands now alienated must revert to the Crown either by tax recovery proceedings, exchange or expropriation, before it will be possible to work out any generally satisfactory scheme.
- (2) That no lands now belonging to the Crown be alienated and that steps be taken to cancel any outstanding agreements in arrears.
- (3) That provision be made for the retirement of Crown liens now registered against the land.
- (4) That while stock raising is the essential industry, it can only be carried on if the lands are leased at a very low rental.
- (5) That lands which have been under cultivation for a number of years are practically valueless for grazing purposes, and that it will take many years to bring them back to grass.
- (6) That it is necessary to provide for substantial reductions in the liabilities of the farmers.
- (7) That the majority of the farmers now left in the area are most desirable settlers, and should be given first consideration if they desire to remain.
- (8) That any of the present settlers desiring to move to new locations be assisted with free freight and in the event of the new location being a second homestead, that arrangements be made by which it will be possible for such settler to receive advances, properly secured, from time to time, not exceeding in any one case the sum of One thousand dollars, to enable such settler to provide buildings on the second homestead and to carry him until the new farm is productive, this to apply only to the man who has failed on his first homestead, through no fault of his own, and who is being moved to a new location.
- (9) That the present rural municipal and school organizations be rescinded and that the school area be mapped

out to fit the needs of the settlers.

(10) That conservation of the surface water throughout the area is essential.

(11) That steps be taken to institute discovery examinations for underground water or artesian wells in that portion of the area which is now destitute of water.

(12) That arrangements be made for:-

- (a) Surveys, plans and cost estimates of a supply canal from the eastern section of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company Irrigation System to Tide Lake.
- (b) The traversing of any likely centres in these townships where the water supply is inadequate, so as to determine at what points the surface water can be stored most economically.
- (c) The measuring of the capacity of all springs and examining the possibilities of improving them by conserving the water supply.
- (d) The examination of wells throughout those townships in which the water supply is inadequate so as to endeavour to determine the capacity of same if equipped with windmills and tanks.

It is probable that some of these suggestions have already been acted upon, as the result of recommendations which have been made from time to time during the past year, but they are repeated so that the whole situation can be reported upon at this time.

Recommendations.

While it is not possible to outline a plan which can be applied specifically to the whole area, as any solution must be sufficiently elastic to meet all the problems requiring settlement, the Commission is of the opinion that a general plan can be worked out, and with this in view, begs to recommend the adoption of the following proposals:-

1. That this be declared a settlement area and that no further lands be alienated from the Crown.
2. That parliamentary and legislative authority be secured to enable the properly constituted authorities to make compromise settlements of arrears of taxes, road grain and relief loans and any other Crown claims now laid against the lands or to cancel in their entirety any such Crown claims if found necessary.
3. That a Board be appointed to administer the land within the area, with representation a group of Dominion and Provincial interests, such Board to consist of not less than three and not more than five members.
4. That the powers of the Board be sufficiently broad to meet all requirements and to include the following:-
 - (a) To make general regulations for the settlement of

of said lands, such regulations to become effective upon approval by Order-in-Council.

(b) To define lease areas, fix terms for leases and rentals payable thereon, having in view the use for which such lands might be utilized, and to provide that such rental be an inclusive one to cover all taxes and charges which may be levied against such lands, in addition to the return to the Crown for the rental of said lands.

(c) To adjust and vary the leases already granted, whenever possible, so as to provide for the distribution of the water supply to the best advantage.

(d) To decide upon the amount of the debenture liability, if any, now outstanding, which shall be carried as a specific charge against any school district and to negotiate with the debenture holders so as to arrive at an adjustment of all the debenture liability now payable by the rural and village school districts.

(e) To arrange for the removal of settlers to new locations within the area.

(f) To lease lands to the present residents of the area, such residents to be given the first refusal of reasonable acreage now occupied by them or which is adjacent to their present holdings.

(g) To set aside any area for community grazing if deemed advisable.

(h) To segregate any section within the area from the general provisions relating to the closed area.

(i) To deal with all questions of policy relating to such lands.

5. That authority be given to a properly constituted authority to order an exchange of land with any owner or other interested party, such exchange to be on a valuation basis, and to lands within any portion of the area which may be set aside for that purpose, or to other Crown lands, in the right of the Dominion or of the Province, outside the area, if considered advisable, so as to bring the Crown lands into solid parcels.

In making this recommendation, it is not suggested that any consideration be given to encumbrances or charges now registered or levied against these lands, but only to the actual value of the lands, if unencumbered, it being understood that the holders of such encumbrances or charges must be prepared to accept the loss which has been sustained through the fact that the lands are not adapted to the use to which they were put when the advances now forming such encumbrances were made, and that the desire is to so consolidate the holdings that the private interests will be able to secure some returns from the land in which they are interested which, under present conditions is practically impossible, as well as to enable the Crown to deal with other parcels by providing for the closing of road allowances wherever necessary.

6. That authority be given to the proper officials by parliamentary action if necessary, whereby the vacant school lands within the area can be exchanged, on a valuation basis, for other Crown lands outside the area, so that all lands within the area will be consolidated into one block and be subject to one control only.
7. That first consideration in the allotment of lands be given to the present residents of the area who desire to remain.
8. That every possible assistance be given to the residents in adjusting their existing liabilities, and that it be a condition of entering into an agreement to secure further lands in the area, that the old liabilities have been adjusted.
9. That proceedings be taken against all lands in arrears for taxes, whether occupied or abandoned, so as to secure title thereto in the name of the Crown, and that the Board be consulted in fixing the terms of the redemption and the upset price for said lands.
10. That arrangements be made in cases where proceedings are taken by taxing authorities, under the Tax Recovery Act, whereby the passing of title to any parcel of land to the taxing authority will have the effect of disposing of all liens, Dominion and Provincial, which may be registered against such parcel of land, so that the taxing authority will secure clear title thereto.
11. That the existing rural municipalities be disorganized as soon as possible and that control be exercised in securing title to lands in arrears for taxes in such districts.
12. That the basis of valuation of land for assessment purposes be revised, so that the assessment will be reduced to the approximate valuation, having in view the use to which such lands can be put.
13. That school districts not in operation be disorganized and that the remaining districts be reorganized to meet the actual needs of the community.
14. That the debenture indebtedness now chargeable against the school districts, or so much thereof as may be decided by the Board as being chargeable to the area at large, be placed against the lands within the area and be retired out of the proceeds from rentals of lands within such area.
15. That arrangements be made for the closing of all road allowances on any grazing leases which may be granted, and for the opening of any necessary trunk roads to meet the needs of the community.
16. That steps be taken to cancel the interest of the Green Land & Irrigation Company in all lands controlled by them within the area so that such lands will revert to the Crown and that all outstanding agreements for sale, pre-emption and purchased homestead agreements in arrears be cancelled.

17. That the necessary arrangements be made for conservation of water and supplying water wherever possible, under the supervision of the Reclamation Branch of the Department of the Interior.
18. That authority be given for the continuation of any experimental work now under way and for the extension of same, so as to discover the fodders, grasses, ~~prairie~~, etc. best adapted to the area.
19. That all applications for leases be received by the present officials of the Dominion Land Department, but that such applications be referred to the Board to be passed upon before any allotment is made.
20. That the officials of the Dominion Land Department as far as expedient, be responsible for the administration of all leased lands, subject to the supervision of the Board, including the collection of the inclusive charges levied against the same, such charges to be collected in advance.
21. That any applications for leases now pending with the Dominion Land Department be passed upon by the Board, and that temporary leases only be granted pending the consolidation of the parcels to be used for lease purposes.
22. That any leases granted and any agreements entered into with the residents of the area be non-assignable except with the approval and consent of the Board.

The Report on the Southern Alberta Drought Area, dated December 17, 1924, made by B. Russell, Reclamation Engineer and C.E. Snelson, Senior Irrigation Specialist, Department of the Interior, Dominion Water Power & Reclamation Service, is presented with this Report as the information contained therein and the exhibits attached thereto is of considerable value when dealing with the question of water supply, and the use of the lands within this area for ranching and other purposes.

Dated at Edmonton, this eighth day of December, 1926.

S. J. W. M.

Chairman.

B. Russell

Member.

N. Snelson

Member.

[Signature]

Member.

TILLEY EAST AREA COMMISSION.

RECORD OF COUNTIES IN ALBERTA

Date of Incorporation Effective January 1	County	Area in Twp.	Population 1971	No. of Councillors	Date of Vote	For Retention	Against	Percentage
1951	County of Grande Prairie No. 1	62.3	8,697	11	Jan. 15, 1955	1,039	462	69.2
1952	County of Vulcan No. 2	60.9	4,330	11	Jan. 15, 1955	739	432	62.2
1953	County of Ponoka No. 3	33.4	8,392	7	Jan. 14, 1956	391	210	65.0
1954	County of Newell No. 4	65.3	5,893	9	Feb. 2, 1957	239	49	83.3
1955	County of Warner No. 5	46.8	4,386	9	Jan. 4, 1958	376	97	79.1
	County of Stettler No. 6	43.6	5,640	9				
	County of Thornhill No. 7	22.3	4,324	7	Mar. 21, 1959	812	141	86.0
1958	County of Forty Mile No. 8	80.3	4,104	9	No vote opted			
	County of Beaver No. 9	37.0	6,009	7	No vote opted			
	County of Wetaskiwin No. 10	35.1	8,435	7	No vote opted			
1959	County of Barhead No. 11	26.1	5,467	7	No vote opted			
	County of Athabasca No. 12	48.1	6,147	9	No vote opted			
	County of Smoky Lake No. 13	28.1	4,028	7	No vote opted			
1961	County of Lacombe No. 14	29.6	8,367	7	No vote opted			
	County of Sturgeon No. 15				Reverted by plebiscite to MD. in 1965			
	County of Wheatland No. 16	51.6	5,052	7	No vote opted			
	County of Mountain View No. 17	40.7	8,656	7	No vote opted			

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